



CONGRESSMAN CURT WELDON

7th District Pennsylvania



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 26, 1999

CONTACT: Maureen Cragin
Ryan Vaart
(202) 225-2539

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CURT WELDON
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT**

N
E
W
S

R
E
L
E
A
S
E

This afternoon, the Military Research and Development Subcommittee meets in open session to receive testimony on KGB operations and on Soviet-era and contemporary Russian threat perceptions. What we are about to hear today will prove, I expect, to be some of the most startling testimony ever to be received by the United States Congress. Their testimony is not just about history but, I believe, has profound implications for understanding contemporary Russia, and for understanding the real magnitude of the threats that we may face from that part of the world.

We are honored to have with us today Professor Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky.

Professor Andrew, together with KGB defector Vasili Mitrokhin, has written an important book—*The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB*. For decades, Vasili Mitrokhin labored in the archives of the KGB, secretly taking notes on KGB operations. When he defected to the West, Mitrokhin had several trunks full of material cribbed from the KGB archives. It is the largest haul of classified KGB records ever obtained by the West.

The Mitrokhin archives document Moscow’s tendency to see the world in the darkest, most pessimistic terms, to suspect everyone and everything, and to assume that global nuclear war was not merely a remote theoretical possibility, but a clear, present, and immediate danger. *The Sword and the Shield* also documents Moscow’s tendency to pursue extremely aggressive—and often bizarre—intelligence operations to gain the upper hand in what was perceived as an impending global conflict.

Andrew and Mitrokhin reveal particularly dramatic evidence of Moscow’s alarmist attitudes and behavior in the KGB’s pre-positioning on NATO territory, and possibly United States territory, caches of high-explosives and arms intended for sabotage operations in the event of war. After the Cold War, Russian political and military leaders never disclosed the existence of these caches to the West. Andrew and Mitrokhin’s information has led to the discovery of arms and explosives hidden in Switzerland and Belgium, so far. The FBI is conducting an ongoing investigation for KGB arms caches in the United States.

Unfortunately, Vasili Mitrokhin could not appear before us today because of illness in his family.

However, we are fortunate to have with us Oleg Gordievsky, who served as the KGB’s chief of station in London during the early 1980s. Gordievsky also collaborated with Christopher Andrew in the

(MORE)

book, *KGB: The Inside Story*, which describes how Soviet political and military leaders became convinced that nuclear war was imminent. The protracted “war scare” in Moscow made East-West relations potentially far more explosive than was appreciated in Washington at the time. For example, unknown to the West, the NATO theater nuclear exercise ABLE ARCHER-83, conducted in November 1983, was misconstrued by the Soviets as possible preparations for a surprise nuclear attack, and nearly triggered a Soviet preemptive nuclear strike.

How is all of this relevant today?

Well, for one thing, the discovery of Russian explosives and arms caches on NATO territory appears to confirm or make more credible the claims of Stanislav Lunev, a former colonel in Russian military intelligence, who testified before this committee on August 4, 1998.

Lunev defected to the United States in 1992 after working for more than a decade in the U.S. as a GRU operative. Lunev participated in a GRU program collecting information on the President and senior U.S. political and military leaders so they may be targeted for assassination in the event of war. According to Lunev, small man-portable nuclear weapons—that could be disguised to look like a suitcase—would be employed in a decapitating Russian attack against U.S. leaders and key communications and military facilities. Colonel Lunev claimed that the Russian military and intelligence services still regard the United States as the enemy and consider war with the U.S. as “inevitable.”

Colonel Lunev stated that man-portable nuclear weapons may already be located in the United States. Lunev’s claim is based on his understanding of GRU doctrine for employing these weapons, which calls for pre-positioning nuclear weapons in the United States during peacetime, before a crisis or war makes penetration of the U.S. more difficult. Lunev testified that he actively supported the GRU program to pre-position man-portable nuclear weapons in the United States by indentifying in the U.S. potential hiding places where such weapons could be stored and concealed until needed. Lunev was specially trained to disguise and camouflage such weapons.

Another reason Lunev suspected small atomic weapons might already be pre-positioned in the United States was because Alexander Lebed, former Secretary of the Russian Security Council, told a U.S. congressional delegation in May 1997 that dozens of such weapons were unaccounted for. Lebed told the U.S. delegation, and later testified before this committee on October 1, 1997, that the missing nuclear devices were the perfect terrorist weapon, as the small A-bombs were made to look like suitcases and could be detonated by one person with less than 30-minutes preparation. In a hearing before this committee on October 2, 1997, Alexei Yablokov, a former member of the Russian Security Council and respected scientist, supported Lebed’s claim that Russia had in fact manufactured “suitcase” nuclear weapons. Although the Russian government initially denied the existence of these weapons, Moscow eventually acknowledged that such weapons had been produced.

Colonel Lunev suggested that the “nuclear suitcases” unaccounted for by General Lebed’s audit of the Russian nuclear stockpile may, in fact, be pre-positioned in NATO and the United States. Now we know from the Mitrokhin archive that Russia did, in fact, pre-position conventional weapons and explosives. Are “nuclear suitcases” also somewhere out there?

No one in the West knows what a Russian “nuclear suitcase” bomb actually looks like. However, we have with us today a notional model of what such a device might look like. The model is inert, with no chemical or nuclear explosives or working parts that could cause an explosion. Nor does the model have wires, to satisfy the Bomb Squad’s legitimate security concerns, so that the model may be brought into congressional spaces.

(MORE)

The model is based on unclassified data on the components in an atomic artillery shell, to see if such a system could be reassembled in a suitcase. Indeed, as it turns out, the physics package, neutron generators, batteries, arming mechanism and other essentials of a small atomic weapon can fit, just barely, in an attache case. The result is a plutonium-fueled gun-type atomic weapon having a yield of one-to-ten kilotons, the same yield range attributed by General Lebed to the Russian “nuclear suitcase” weapon.

But my remarks have perhaps dwelled excessively on “nuclear suitcases.” For the implications of what Christopher Andrew, Oleg Gordievsky, and the Mitrokhin archives have to tell us is more important. The implications go to deeper, more profound issues about Moscow’s overall worldview that may explain much in contemporary Russian behavior that we find at once frightening, and puzzling. Is it possible that Moscow’s alarmist threat perceptions in the recent Cold War continue today in the Russian military and intelligence services? Do Russian military and intelligence elites still harbor “war scare” attitudes, fueled by Moscow’s fear of the growing disparity between East and West in military, economic, and political power? Does this explain why Russia continues building nuclear bunkers, such as the vast underground shelter at Yamantau Mountain, when it cannot even provide housing for officers and ordinary people? Does this explain why Russia is investing so heavily in new generations of strategic nuclear missiles, spends scarce resources on nuclear wargames that send bombers flying toward Alaska and Europe, and has put such effort into developing a new nuclear warfighting doctrine? Is Russian nuclear sabre rattling over NATO expansion and U.S.-led military operations in the Balkans and the Middle East more than merely propaganda or, perhaps, real warnings that should be taken more seriously?

The testimony we receive today may help illuminate these questions. Professor Andrew and Mr. Gordievsky, we welcome you and thank you for being here. However, before I turn the floor over to you, I want to call upon Mr. Pickett, the ranking Democrat, respectfully.

###